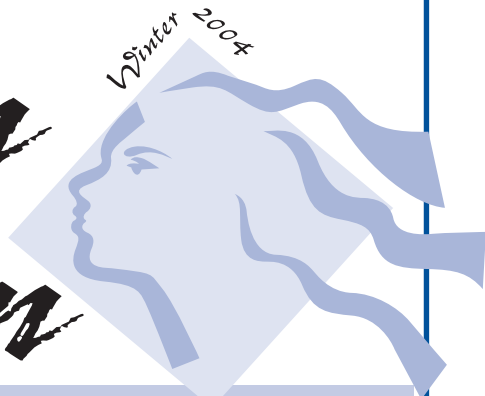


Michigan Women

A Publication
of the
Michigan
Women's
Commission

Winter 2004



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Michigan Ranked One of Worst States in U.S. for Women's Wage Parity with Men

"Why do you want to write about history? The point is to make it!"

Alice Paul, an originator of the 1923 Equal Rights Amendment, which has never been passed.

Michigan women continue to earn significantly less than men – 67 cents for every dollar men get – according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and the Grand Rapids-based Nokomis Foundation, who recently published a report on the status of Michigan women.

"Women were being shortchanged when we did

our first report on Michigan eight years ago – and they're still coming up short every payday," according to Heidi Hartmann, president of the Institute for Women's Policy Research. "At this snail's pace, it will be another half century before working women reach equality with working men in Michigan," Hartmann said.

Published for the first time in nearly a decade, the 2004

Status of Women in Michigan report ranks women's progress since 1996 in five areas: Employment and Earnings; Social and Economic Autonomy; Health and Well-Being; Reproductive Rights and Political Participation. Comparisons are based on census and other data sources for all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Michigan women achieved slight improvements in

some social and economic indicators, reproductive rights and levels of political influence, but still face gender-based inequities.

Employment and Earnings: (C-)

Compared to the 1996 report, Michigan slipped from 27th to 33rd in the nation, with a composite score of "C-" in the Employment and Earnings section, despite relatively

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Women's Wage Parity

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high median annual incomes for women. Michigan's overall score was dragged down by the gap between men's and women's wages. According to the IWPR, Michigan women earn two-thirds of what Michigan men earn for full-time employment. Although the ratio improved from 62% in 1996, Michigan women lost ground compared to women in other states, including the other four states in the north central region: Illinois, Indiana, Ohio & Wisconsin.

On the positive side, Michigan is one of only five states where the median earnings of African American women are equal to or higher than white women's (\$30,900, compared to \$46,400 for men) for full-time work. Asian women's earnings were slightly higher (\$35,300) than all other ethnic groups.

The state ranked 10th in the nation and 1st in the region for women's business ownership, with 27 percent of Michigan businesses owned by women. Women's participation in the labor force has remained relatively steady at 59 percent for the last decade.

Health and Well-Being: (D+)

Michigan received one of its worst composite scores in the area of Health & Well-Being, ranking 37th overall and earning a "D+" score, due to high rates of poor mental health, diabetes and heart disease. The state ranks in the bottom two states for the incidence of poor mental health. Michigan women are more likely to be diagnosed with

diabetes than women in all but six other states, more likely to die from heart disease than women in 41 other states, and likelier to die of breast cancer or lung cancer than women in most other states. However, the incidence of AIDS among women is the lowest Michigan has seen in recent years, at 3.2 per 100,000 women.

Michigan women's high death rates from cancer and heart diseases are linked to smoking rates that are significantly higher than other states. As of 1995, a higher percentage of women 18 to 29 years old smoked in Michigan than any other state.

Political Participation: (B)

Michigan received its highest composite score in the area of Women's Political Participation, scoring 2nd in the country and "B" overall, up from 24th in 1996. The improvement is based primarily on the election of U.S. Senator Deborah Stabenow and Governor Jennifer Granholm. Michigan has a slightly higher than average percentage of women in the state legislature, as well. However, Michigan is losing ground in this category. The number of women state legislators will drop in January 2005 to 19 (from the present 24) in the House and is holding at only 11 in the Senate, while the pipeline of women city and county elected officials is slowing to a trickle.

Social & Economic Autonomy: (C)

In the area of Social and Economic Autonomy, Michigan received a "C" score and 25th overall

ranking, up slightly from its 28th ranking in 1996. Among the key findings: Michigan women are more likely than women in the nation to own a business with the state ranking 10th nationally; more than one in 10 Michigan women live below the poverty line. The IWPR adds that the federal poverty line "probably understates the degree of hardship among women by not adequately including the real costs of housing, child care, health care, and transportation."

Reproductive Rights: (D-)

Michigan remains one of the ten worst states for Reproductive Rights, earning its poorest composite score ("D-", 42nd rank, up from 45th). Key factors include: health insurers not being required to provide comprehensive coverage for contraceptives or infertility treatments, and minors requiring parental consent for an abortion.

"Women's economic power, health, and voices are essential to well-functioning families, strong communities and the state's competitiveness," said Kym Mulhern, CEO of the Nokomis Foundation. "We hope this report will provide a clearer picture of the opportunities and dangers facing one of the state's most valuable resources: Michigan women."

The report recommends policies to improve the status of women, including:

- Addressing the state's fiscal crisis with long-term solutions that help provide resources needed by women and their families to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency in the wake of funding cuts to education, health care

and social services.

- Increasing recruitment of female candidates by political parties, and campaign finance reform.
- Enacting living wage laws statewide and in Michigan localities and a higher federal minimum wage.
- Improving educational and job training opportunities.
- Passing state laws mandating insurance companies to cover mental health on par with physical health and to cover contraceptives.
- Increasing funding for programs to help victims of domestic and sexual violence.
- Calling on women to step forward and strive for leadership roles in communities, business, and in government at all levels.

The Status of Women in Michigan, which includes focus reports on African American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American women, violence against women and prostitution, is available online at www.nokomisfoundation.org and at www.iwpr.org. The Institute for Women's Policy Research also issued a national report, *The Status of Women in the States*, which is available for purchase at www.iwpr.org.

The Nokomis Foundation is a private, Grand Rapids foundation focused on creating a stronger voice for women and girls. The IWPR is a nonprofit, public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on public policy issues of critical importance to women and their families.

Making the Local Case: New Toolkit on the Status of Women at the County Level

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and the James A. & Faith Knight Foundation have joined efforts in a new project to assess and track the status of women at the county level. The new toolkit consists of a community research tool and a manual for decision-makers and advocates about writing a county-level report on the status of women.

Modeled on IWPR's *Status of Women in the States* project, the toolkit takes this idea one step further by providing user-friendly, clear directions on how to create a county-level report on the status of women. The compact pamphlet consists of 28 questions and tips on collecting the information. It is designed to be used by the general public.

Barbara Gault, Director of Research at IWPR, explained county level analyses are becoming increasingly common, due in part to greater availability of local data in some areas. New county-level reports on the status of women will inform local policy by identifying areas of need and providing a context for local policy agendas.

"*The Status of Women in the States* reports have been incredibly useful for policymakers and advocates in Michigan by providing detailed data on women's status at the state level. This tool will be a great resource for women's organizations in all of the states to take the framework of the *Status of Women in the States* project and apply it at a local level," said Margaret Talburtt, Executive Director of the James A. & Faith Knight Foundation.

Check the toolkit out at <http://www.iwpr.org/States2004> or www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

The James A. & Faith Knight Foundation primarily serves Michigan's Jackson and Washtenaw counties, and is dedicated to improving communities by providing grant support to qualified nonprofit organizations including, but not limited to, those that address the needs of women and girls; animals and the natural world; and internal capacity. The foundation is based in Ann Arbor, MI.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research is a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating the debate on issues of critical importance to women and their families. IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family issues, health and safety, and women's civic and political participation. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups around the country. IWPR, an independent, non-partisan research organization, also works in affiliation with the graduate programs in public policy and women's studies at The George Washington University. IWPR is a non-profit, tax exempt organization, primarily supported by foundations.

Women in the 2004 Election

The number of women elected to the Michigan House of Representatives is declining. In 2004, in Michigan, we elected 19 women to the Michigan House. This number represents decreased representation of women. Currently 24 women serve in the 100 member body. Between 1997 and 2000, women's participation was at its peak, with 31 women serving in the Michigan House. The Michigan Senate has greater female representation. Michigan has 11 women in the Senate, out of 38 members, the highest number ever.

Nationally, a record 139 women ran for the U.S. House of Representatives this year, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers. Of that group, the 57 incumbents won reelection and eight newcomers won seats in Congress. In addition, three women retained their seats in as non-voting delegates, representing the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. Though three congresswomen are stepping down this year, a record 65 women will serve in the House when the 109th Congress convenes in January.

The number of women in the U. S. House of Representatives may increase even further, as Democrat Willie Mount, running in Louisiana's 7th District, faces a runoff election on December 4 against incumbent Republican Charles W. Boustany.

In the U. S. Senate, all five female incumbents up for reelection held onto their seats, though all five female challengers lost their races. The number of women in the Senate will hold steady at 14 out of 100. In addition, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow from Michigan was elected the third-ranking Democrat in the Senate as secretary of the Democratic caucus.

Three women ran for state governor this year: Ruth Ann Minner of Delaware, Claire McCaskill of Missouri and Christine Gregoire of Washington. Minner, a Democratic incumbent, won her race, while Democrat McCaskill lost.

For more information on women and politics, go to www.cawp.rutgers.edu

“Lead poisoning isn’t a problem in Michigan..... IS IT???”

Most of us have seen the end of lead-based paint for residences (1978) and lead as a gasoline additive (1985), and assume that the risk of lead poisoning is gone. We fail to realize the persistence of lead in our environment. Lead does not have a half-life, lead does not disintegrate, lead does not become less potent over time. When added to our environment, this heavy metal remains where deposited unless physically removed, tilled or buried. The lead that remains all around us makes childhood lead poisoning the number one children’s environmental health disease in the United States.

Michigan currently ranks as the sixth highest state in terms of the estimated population of children with lead poisoning, and the percentage of children found in Michigan with elevated blood lead levels remains higher than the national average. In 2003, more than 100,000 children under the age of six years were tested for blood lead status and 3,141 children were found to be lead poisoned.

A commonly held myth is that children become lead-poisoned by eating paint chips. Most childhood lead poisoning is a result of exposure to the dust from lead-based paint as it ages, is damaged by water or leaks, or is disturbed during home renovation. Homes in poor repair may have a fine dust, often barely

visible, on floors, in carpet, windowsills and window troughs, porches and in the “drip line” around the edge of the home, including the garage. Cleaning with a standard home vacuum cleaner does not remove the hazard.

During home renovation or window replacement, the paint dust that is disturbed or created may be heavily lead-laden. In homes in which replacement and repair is underway, the occupants may be exposed to significant lead dust, which is ingested or inhaled by children and adults who live there or visit.

Adult occupations, hobbies and recreational activities may also be sources of exposure to lead dust for families. Occupational exposure is the predominant source of lead exposure for adults (casting brass or bronze fixtures, performing abrasive blasting on outdoor metal structures, lead dust at shooting ranges, radiator repair facilities), with the dust being brought home to other family members, especially children, on clothing, shoes and on the body of the exposed individual.

Children younger than six years of age are the children most harmed by lead exposure. The youngest children are especially vulnerable. Children in the prenatal period and first three years of life are experiencing rapid brain and central nervous system growth, “wiring” them for

all their future cognitive and behavioral functioning, hearing development, and development of their visual capacity. At the same time, these youngsters absorb much more of the lead that they are exposed to than adults. Children are very close to the exposure sources (window sills & troughs and floors) due to their short size and their activities, such as playing on the floor, pulling up at windowsills, playing in exposed dirt. Kids have LOTS of hand-to-mouth activity as they explore and “take-in” their world. Lead dust on hands and toys gets transferred into the mouth quite easily.

The severity of what happens next depends on age at exposure, exposure “dose”, exposure chronicity and individual physical response. One child’s exposure may not be evident in the same way as another child’s. We know that lead poisoning cannot be undone. Lead exposure affects a child’s vision, hearing, behavior, growth and cognitive

ability. It affects success in school and success in life and relationships. The lead that accumulates in a child’s body and brain may cause anemia, hearing loss, hyperactivity, aggressive behavior, liver and kidney damage, developmental delay, difficulty with learning due to loss of IQ, brain damage, and in extreme cases, even coma and death.

Lead poisoning is a serious environmental illness that has life-long effects on the individuals who become lead poisoned, and yet is entirely preventable. Prevention of lead exposure is our responsibility as parents and caring adults.

For more information, call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 517.335.8885 or visit the Michigan Department of Community Health web site www.michigan.gov/mdch and go to

Link: *Physical Health and Prevention*

Link: *Prevention*

Link: *Lead Poisoning*

Six Michigan Women Inducted into Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame

On October 28, six Michigan women were inducted in the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame at the 21st annual awards ceremony, hosted by the Michigan Women’s Studies Association, in Novi. The three contemporary honorees included Governor Jennifer M. Granholm; Florine Mark, president and chairman of the board of the WW Group, Inc.; and Cathy McClelland, founder, president, and CEO of the Detroit Entrepreneurship Institute. The three historical honorees are The Hon. Geraldine Bledsoe Ford; Lystra E. Gretter, RN; and Constance Mayfield Rourke. At the same ceremony, Bill Laimbeer, head coach of the

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Michigan Battered Women's Clemency Project

On October 8, the Michigan Battered Women's Clemency Project held a rally in Lansing, asking Governor Granholm and the Parole Board to grant clemency for women jailed for defending themselves against their abusive partners.

The Michigan Battered Women's Clemency Project was founded in 1991. It is a volunteer effort working to identify, interview, select and oversee the preparation and filing of clemency petitions for women in Michigan prisons who have been convicted of murder, but who acted in self-defense against their abuser. The Clemency Project advocates for battered women prisoners through clemency petitions and other legal and advocacy efforts. The Clemency Project also publishes original research, and provides public education through events, rallies, lectures, publications,

and free distribution and screenings of films narrated by Michigan women prisoners.

The project is supported by a variety of organizations and individuals, including Amnesty International USA, Human Rights Watch, Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Michigan Women's Foundation, Safe House, the Michigan Judges' Association, the University of Michigan, Michigan NOW, Michigan Women Lawyers Association, Jean Ledwith King, Elizabeth Brater, Alma Wheeler Smith, Dawn Van Hoek, John Conyers, Jr., Lynn Rivers, Mary Schroer, Lynn Martinez, James Neuland, Governor William Milliken, Mrs. Helen Milliken, Debbie Stabenow, and others.

For additional information about the project visit the web site www.umich.edu/~clemency/

Local Women's Commissions

The Ingham County Women's Commission is celebrating its 30th anniversary. The Women's Commission was created by a resolution of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners on August 13, 1974. The commission has provided many services in the community throughout its 30 years, such as supporting the local domestic violence shelter and the Women's Historical Center Hall of Fame. Members are Becky Brimley, Mary Finch, Dorice Carlice, Mary Lindemann, Albert LeBlanc, Katey Brown, Deborah Lynch, Vicci Marrero Knowlton, Kristen McDonald-Stone, Rebecca-Bahar Cook, Cindie Alwood, and Commissioner Calvin Lynch. For more information see www.ingham.org/bc.wom. Congratulations!

Detroit has recently formed the Detroit Women's Commission. The members of the commission are Emma Bell, Ida Coleman Estell, Sandra Kent, Maryann Lee, May Luevanos, Annette Rainwater, Jacqueline Washington, Ingrid White and Kitty Whitfield.

State Responding to Nursing Home Complaints within 24 Hours

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm announced that the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is now responding to serious complaints about nursing home care within 24 hours, providing a hotline to handle complaints at any hour of the day. The new complaint response program is the direct result of Public Act 189 signed by the Governor in July.

The new law requires MDCH to respond to "priority" complaints about nursing homes within 24 hours. These "priority" complaints include injury of unknown origin to a patient, sexual assault, intimidation or threatening actions toward a patient, a fall that resulted in a fracture and is a result of suspected abuse and/or neglect, inadequate staffing that negatively impacted a patient's health or safety, and failure to obtain appropriate care or medical services.

The new law also changes how MDCH handles complaints, removing the requirement that all complaints be put in writing by the person reporting it. Now, complaints will be taken over the phone. MDCH staff will reduce the oral complaint into a written one within seven days.

Citizens needing to make a complaint can call the hotline number: 1-800-882-6006. The hotline is monitored for messages once every hour, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Women's Hall of Fame

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WNBA Detroit Shock, was presented with the Philip A. Hart Award, given to a Michigan male citizen who has contributed significantly to the advancement of women's rights.

Inductees to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame are women who have made a significant and long-lasting impact on Michigan and in their communities. Their accomplishments and contributions to this state have been of major significance, and are permanently recognized through exhibits at the Michigan Women's Historical Center's Women's Hall of Fame Gallery, which includes more than 200 distinguished women who have been inducted since the awards began in 1983.

The Michigan Women's Studies Association, parent organization of the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame, was founded in 1973 at Michigan State University to change what is thought and taught about women's roles in history.

For information on the Association and the Hall of Fame, including directions to the exhibit gallery in Lansing, go to www.michiganwomenshalloffame.org.

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CALENDAR

March 10, Thursday – Michigan Women's Commission meeting in Lansing

March 11, Friday – Michigan Women's Summit 2005: The Equity Challenge

Michigan Women's Summit 2005

On March 11, 2005, leading women's organizations in Michigan will sponsor the Michigan Women's Summit 2005: The Equity Challenge. The Summit will bring women together from all over the state in multiple locations via teleconference, and will include national and state speakers, panel discussions, workshops, and message/media training.

Community Health Department Appoints Chief Nursing Executive

The Michigan Department of Community Health took a step toward addressing the state's nursing workforce shortage this fall by appointing Jeanette Klemczak as the new Chief Nursing Executive. As the state's top nurse, Ms. Klemczak will work to attract, train and retain dedicated health care professionals in the nursing workforce. Ms. Klemczak, a former practicing nurse, is on leave from her position as the Director of Faculty Clinical Practice at the Michigan State University College of Nursing.

For information about a career in nursing, visit the Michigan Nurses Association web site, www.minurses.org/career

Thank you, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Dorothy Comstock Riley

On October 23, 2004, retired Michigan Supreme Court Justice Dorothy Comstock Riley died. She served on the Michigan Supreme Court from 1984 until 1997. Riley served as a Wayne County Circuit judge and was the first woman to serve as a Michigan Court of Appeals judge. She was also the second woman to become a Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. She was a partner in the firm of Riley and Roumell. Throughout her career, she was involved in a number of professional and community organizations that supported women. She was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1991.